



New Lebanon
Central School
District

Federal Communications Commission
Re: Proposed E Rate Regulatory Revisions
Proceeding Nos. 06-122; 19-46

July 26, 2019

Dear Commissioners:

On behalf of the New Lebanon Central School District, a rural school district in New York State, I write to impress on you the far reaching, deleterious impact of the above captioned regulatory revision. In our rural communities, lack of access to the Internet is a significant barrier to both a quality education and a viable economy. The E Rate Program has served America well by supporting rural connectivity. However, much remains to be done if we are to support rural America in efforts to rebound from the massive loss of economic activity.

Like most rural schools New Lebanon is proud of its high graduation rate, but this achievement masks a looming issue of equity resulting from inadequate Internet access in my community. We need all high school graduates to have the resources to compete in a global world. The Internet, much like the school bus in its day, allows rural students to overcome time and the lack of local resources and access an education that is competitive with urban and suburban counterparts. The choice is simple: Provide readily available and affordable broad band access to rural students or relegate them and their communities to poverty. This choice is in your hands.

Rural schools are creative, innovative and resourceful. Some have partnered with hospitals, emergency services and county agencies to create a level of Internet access for their communities. Some have been forced to make school buses a Wi-Fi hotspot in order to provide access in remote areas. Others volunteer to stay after hours to keep schools open for students who have Internet access only at school. E Rate works. The proposed changes eviscerate that good work by forcing often impoverished communities to choose between their sick and injured and their children. Other nations have successfully overcome fiscal obstacles to provide broadband access to all. We have not. America is better than that.

Please support America's competitive international position by allowing a sound education for the millions of our nation's rural students. This ability of millions of America's future workers to become prepared for a fast paced and changing economy is a matter of the utmost national interest. Don't believe that the U.S. can ignore this crisis without serious, permanent economic and social implications.



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Given the vital nature of providing internet access to rural America, I request your rejection of the above referenced regulatory changes.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Leslie Whitcomb". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Leslie" and last name "Whitcomb" clearly distinguishable.

Leslie Whitcomb
Superintendent